Coldest spring for more than 50 years

30 May 2013 - Lower than average temperatures over the past fortnight have helped put this spring on track to be the coldest in more than 50 years, according to early provisional statistics from the Met Office.

The UK's mean temperature for the season (March-April-May) is currently 6.0 °C, based on figures from 1 March to 28 May, and assuming average conditions for the final 3 days of the month. The figures are unlikely to change much with such a short time left.

That would make this the 5th coldest spring in national records dating back to 1910 and the coldest spring since 1962.

Earlier figures from 1 March to 15 May suggested spring 2013 was on track to be the 6th coldest on record and the coldest since 1979, but cooler than average weather in the second half of May has pushed the mean temperature for the season slightly lower.

The provisional temperature for this spring goes against recent form for the season, with eight of the past ten years seeing warmer than average springs compared to the long-term (1981-2010) average of 7.7 °C.

The main reason for the low temperatures this season was the exceptionally cold March which had a mean temperature of 2.2 °C, which is 3.3 °C below the long-term average. This made it the coldest March since 1962.

April's mean temperature was slightly below average, but was actually the same as 2012.

Lower than average temperatures at times through May so far have led to a provisional mean temperature of 9.3 °C. If there is no change after the last three days have been included, this would make it the coldest May since 1996.

The colder than average conditions have been caused by different weather patterns at certain times, but generally this season has seen frequent easterly and northerly winds which have brought cold air to the UK from polar and northern European regions.

Rainfall amounts for March and April were below average, but May is already wetter than average, having notched up 86mm of rain up to the 28th of the month, which is higher than the 70mm average.

This suggests spring overall will be slightly drier than average - but not as dry as the springs of 2010 and 2011.

Estimated provisional statistics for spring 2013

	UK	England	Wales	Scotland	NI
Mean temp (° C)	6	6.6	6	4.7	6.3
Diff from avg (° C)	-1.8	-1.9	-2	-1.6	-1.6
Coldest since:	1962	1962	1962	1979	1979
Rainfall (mm)	219	163	247	297	265
% of avg	92	90	85	94	109

Estimated provisional statistics for May 2013

	UK	England	Wales	Scotland	NI
Mean temp (° C)	9.3	10	9	8.1	9.4
Diff from avg (° C)	-1.1	-1.2	-1.6	-0.7	-0.8
Coldest since:	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996
Rainfall (mm)	86	62	102	118	108
% of avg	123	106	119	139	149

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